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ABSTRACT

Skills training, personal-emotional development, and cognitive development are areas of importance in counselor training and education. Emotion, defined as the counselor's experiencing a strong feeling accompanied by physiological activity and the interruption, however momentary, of the counselor's ongoing cognition, is a critical factor in counselor-client interaction. Although some may object to this view of empathic responding as a skill which requires no emotional response on the part of the counselor, empathic responding in and of itself is not taken as a necessary indication of counselor emotion because of the operationalization of empathic responding in terms of rating scales and models for training which can be learned by trainees. Thus, counselor personal-emotional development is appropriately defined as a generalized change of the individual's internal feelings from ones which characteristically inhibit behavior consistent with the values and ethics of the counseling profession to ones which are productive and consistent with professional values and ethics. (Author/HLM)

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DEFINING AND RESEARCHING THE PERSONAL-EMOTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNSELOR TRAINEE

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Defining and Researching the Personal-Emotional
Development of a Counselor Trainee¹

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In this symposium we have chosen to look at three broad topics in counselor education: skills training, personal-emotional development, and cognitive development. To differentiate personal-emotional development (the topic of this paper) from the other two topics, points of view regarding skill, cognition, and emotion are introduced.

Over a decade ago Weizenbaum (1966) published a paper about a computer program referred to by some as the "mad psychiatrist." The program would interact with a human "patient" and on the basis of certain rewrite rules transform the patient's input into an output statement. "I feel sad," for example, could become "You feel sad." Hummel, Lichtenberg, and Shaffer (1975) developed CLIENT I, a computer program which simulated counselor behavior in an initial counseling interview. That program contained an information structure for affective statements based on Davitz's (1969) The Language of Emotion. His research demonstrated ways in which people talked about affect, including ambiguous statements such as "my body is tense" or "I'm wound up inside" referring to frustration or anxiety. Combining Davitz's "dictionary of emotional meaning" with Weizenbaum's rewrite rules could result in "you feel tense" as a response to "I am wound up inside." In fact, an explicit model for responding to the emotional content of a client's statement is presented by Hummel (1976).

If Hummel's model were actually implemented on the computer², its responses to client input could be studied by using the Carkhuff scales to rate the program's level of accurate empathy. If the program's responses were at level three or above, the program could be considered skillful. Another study of the program could be made with respect to its information processing. One could study a "trace" of the program's operation. The internal performance, the decisions, memory references, reordering, transforms, and so on, could be completely scrutinized. In other words the model's "cognitions" could be studied in a totally explicit fashion.

Consistent with the preceding computer metaphor, "skill" in this paper refers to observable counselor performance and implies competence or proficiency. A counselor is "skillful" if his or her overt behavior is judged to be competent or proficient, the behavior being compared to some standard. Skill by itself carries no implications regarding the counselor's motives or emotions or how the counselor emitted the behavior.

From the information processing point of view of this paper, cognition refers to thinking. Thinking is viewed here as primarily volitional, i.e., willful and chosen, and it is synonymous with the problem solving activities which determine the counselor's overt behavior. As the counselor acquires information about the client, recognizes similarities between the client and previous clients, selects from alternative courses of action, plans a case management strategy, recalls the previous reactions of the client, and so on, the counselor is actively involved in the cognition which precedes a behavioral output.

Simon (1967) has described emotion as an "interruption mechanism," important in the control of cognition. Returning to the computer metaphor, suppose the model for empathetic responding were implemented on a machine which had the hardware necessary for English input and that in addition to this hardware the machine had a "perceptron" which could actually input an image of the "client". Imagine a scene on a warm summer day; an attractive woman in "T-shirt" and shorts is interacting with the computer. The perceptron senses information related to coloration, texture, and shape. Given the model developed by Hummel (1976), this information would be totally irrelevant. If the "machine" executing the "empathy program" were instead a male counselor trainee, it is not hard to construct the conditions which would cause this male to notice the client's physical characteristics and experience a desire for her. The point is that the counselor's emotions, in this case feelings of desire, could interrupt the execution of the "empathy program." After interruption, processing of the program might resume; however, control could be transferred to another program with goals different from those of the preceding program. Pribram (1971) has interpreted certain behavioral and neurophysiological data as supporting this interruption interpretation of emotion.

In contrast to skill and cognition, then, emotion is viewed here as the counselor's experiencing a strong feeling accompanied by physiological activity and the interruption, however momentary, of the counselor's ongoing cognition. Typically involuntary, the counselor could experience love, hate, fear, and so on, accompanied by sweating, "butterflies in the stomach," reddening of the face, nausea, and many others. Experiencing

emotions, of course, could be helpful or unproductive depending on the counseling context.

These definitions of skill, cognition, and emotion are used to delimit the definition of personal-emotional development. Some may object to this view of empathic responding as a skill which requires no emotional response on the part of the counselor. The objection deserves attention, for in this paper, consistent with its introduction, empathic responding in and of itself is not taken as a necessary indication of counselor emotion. There are two reasons for this approach.

First, in much of counselor education training and research, empathic responding has been operationalized in terms of rating scales. In describing the training program developed by Truax and Carkhuff (1967), Truax (1970) has stated:

The majority of research studies assess the levels of empathy, warmth, and genuineness by the use of these research scales developed for use with tape recordings of actual counseling or psychotherapy. ... the rating scales themselves can be used didactically for training beginning therapists. ... The scales are used to identify tape-recorded samples of experienced therapists offering very high levels of therapeutic conditions, thus providing models for imitation. It should be remembered that even the best recordings of total sessions usually provide a number of examples of precisely what not to do. Secondly, the trainees are taught the use of the scales so that they will

learn to identify high and low levels of empathy, warmth, and genuineness in their own therapy and in that of others. Third, empathy training, warmth training, or genuineness training, is provided by playing a tape recording of client interviews and then requiring trainees to make immediate therapeutic responses. These responses are immediately rated on the research scales to provide prompt feedback. As the trainee shapes his responses toward higher levels of empathy, warmth, and genuineness, he begins role-playing which, in turn, is recorded, brought to class, and rated by a group of trainees on the research scales. Thus, the trainees compete among themselves in ability to communicate therapeutic conditions. (pp. 10-11)

The phrases "models for imitation" and "trainee shapes his responses" highlight the objective, behavioral focus of the program. It may be argued that an audio tape excerpt includes cues which would indicate the emotions being experienced. However, it seems too great an inferential leap for a third party to judge from an excerpt the correspondence between what the counselor is experiencing emotionally and the emotions being experienced by the client.

In a recent review of "therapist variables", and "training", Parloff, Waskow, and Wolfe (1978) and Matarazzo (1978) acknowledge the impact of this type of model on research and training. However, as Calia (1974) has noted, "confining the helping process to a series of graded steps negates the importance of the inspirational and humanistic components of the therapists' conditions" (p. 91).

Milliken (1965) and Sinick (1966) discuss the counselor as an actor, perhaps playing a role and not expressing real feelings. Given the research available, it seems we can only judge counselors' skills (as defined above) and not whether they are acting.

The second reason for the approach taken here is that, as mentioned earlier, one can define a model empathic response without hypothesizing counselor emotion. Further, initial research results (Shaffer and Hummel, in press) indicate that subjects can learn and employ the model.

Toward a definition of counselor personal-emotional development.

"Development" has been defined as "an orderly sequence of directional changes in behaviors" (Lindzey, Hall, and Thompson, 1975). In some definitions the term implies a change to a more advanced or effective state; at times it is implicit that the change is to a better or more preferred state. Other meanings of the word development include "expanding and elaborating."

The word "person" in the compound word "personal-emotional" has two purposes. One is to emphasize that the counselor's emotions are personally felt, independent of any overt indication of their presence. These emotions are conceptually different from empathetic responses as discussed above. No "if and only if" relationship exists between emotions and responses, although, of course, there could be a correspondence between what is felt and what is said.

Another purpose of the word "personal" is to imply that the development is of the whole person, rather than being restricted to a professional role or set of behaviors. In the counselor training model proposed by Chenault (1968), the growth of the whole person was of concern; the

fractionation of growth into mechanistic parts "was to be carefully avoided". From this point of view one might deduce that development should not be narrowly focused on emotions experienced in the counseling setting. Rather, changes should affect the person's life as a whole and be "characteristic" of the person in a variety of settings and interactions.

One who develops to an expanded and advanced stage of emotionality would probably be thought of as having gone through a personality change, in the sense that something which was characteristic for an individual has been changed. Whether the counselor's emotional development should involve the total person raises important issues. For the moment we shall assume that it should, setting aside for the moment some of the difficult questions this raises.

The introduction of "directional change" as a part of development leads naturally to the question "what direction"? At this point values must be considered. The term "counselor" was included in the phrase to be defined to emphasize that there is a direction for change. The values and ethics of the counseling profession offer guidance for the direction for change, and determining the values and ethics of the counseling profession is not too difficult. The American Psychological Association and the American Personnel and Guidance Association have professional codes of ethics, and the literature on counseling often explicitly or implicitly identifies core values.

It is important to note that an individual's development often cannot be compartmentalized; it must therefore be assumed that an individual's values and ethics might need to change as well as emotional reactions. In discussing moral development and education, Cochrane (1975)

describes moral emotions and feelings as being inextricably bound up with moral development. So, while emotional development and moral development may be considered separately, they are considered to be intimately related.

Descriptions of affective development have not progressed to the point that those of moral development have, but at least one author, Dupont (1978), has attempted a description of affective development using a "Piagetian Model." At the highest stage of development, ideas and values are objects for affect. At this level of emotional development, counselors would be expected to have emotions in relation to professional ethics and values. It should be pointed out that the "elaboration" aspect of emotional development is included in another development theory. A characteristic of stage five in Loevinger's (1976) scheme of ego development is the vivid differentiation of emotions.

One last point should be discussed in considering the relationship between moral and emotional development. As a professional, a counselor is bound to confront situations in which there is conflict among ethical principles. An example would be a conflict between confidentiality and client welfare which might arise, say, in a child abuse case (Callis, 1976, p. 27). The reasoning processes by which the counselor resolves the conflict and the attendant emotional responses must be managed effectively.

The above constructs at least an initial picture of the emotionally developed counselor. These professionals would be able to differentiate their affect, would have emotions in response to values and ethics, would have emotions which operate in support of ethical and productive behavior, and would be able to handle effectively the emotional reactions associated with professional conflict.

To summarize, the words "counselor personal-emotional development" correspond to the following parts of a possible definition:

1. development--a directional change to a more differentiated, advanced and effective state;
2. emotional--dealing with typically involuntary feelings and accompanying physiological activity which interrupt the current train of thought;
3. personal--emphasizes both the internal, private nature of emotion and the wholistic focus of development, the changes becoming characteristic and forming an organized pattern of responding consistent across many life situations;
4. counselor--specifies that the directions for change are consistent with the values and ethics of the profession of counseling.

With the above as context, it is meaningful to attempt a briefly stated definition: the phrase "counselor personal-emotional development" is defined as "a generalized change of the individual's internal feelings from ones which characteristically inhibit behavior consistent with the values and ethics of the counseling profession, to ones which are productive and consistent with professional values and ethics."

In general, counselor personal-emotional development as defined here seems a good thing. It appeals to common sense that the more consistent emotions are across a variety of situations and the more feelings meet expectations derived from professional ethics and values, the more counselors can be at ease with themselves in their professional settings. Counselors' emotions can serve as important resources or as serious liabilities. As with any human potential, proper development is essential.

Research on Counselor Personal-Emotional Development

Much research on training counselors (psychotherapists) and counselor characteristics related to outcome has been summarized in volumes edited by Bergin and Garfield (1971), Gurman and Razin (1977), and Garfield and Bergin (1978). These references can be consulted for a general background; however, they do not summarize research which would completely fit the definition of counselor personal-emotional development constructed above.

Some research has been concerned with changes in counselor trainees along affective dimensions, with the periodical Counselor Education and Supervision containing the largest number of these studies. Because research in this periodical appears to be representative of the affect-related research which exists, attention is confined to this publication in the following discussion. Studies were considered for inclusion in this review primarily on the basis of stated purpose, research design, and criterion measures.

To study counselor personal-emotional development the research must attempt to measure change. This is inherent in the definition of development. Questions of whether the research design calls for a direct or indirect measure of change or whether there are alternative explanations for the results because of poor research design were not of primary concern in selecting studies. Campbell and Stanley's (1963) widely known classification of designs was used to specify examples of classes of research designs which might be used in assessing change. It was felt that their Designs 2, 3, 4, 6, 10 would likely be found in the counseling literature. Recalling that "X" is the treatment, "O" is the observation,

"R" signifies randomization, and a broken line signifies non-random assignment, the designs can be briefly specified as follows:

Design 2

Pre-test Post-test Design

$O_1 \quad X \quad O_2$

Design 3

Post-test only, no randomized assignment

$- \quad X \quad - - \quad \frac{O_1}{O_2}$

Design 4

Randomized, Pretest-Posttest Control Group

$RO_1 \quad X \quad O_2$

$RO_3 \quad O_4$

Design 5

Randomized Posttest Only

$R \quad X \quad O_1$

$R \quad O_2$

Design 10

Pretest-Posttest Non Random Control Group

$\frac{O_1}{O_3} - \frac{X}{O_4} - \frac{O_2}{O_4}$

These designs can all be used to assess change. Contrasts are between observations known to be unaffected by the treatment and observations which might have been affected by the treatment. There is the implicit assumption (justified or not) that had X not occurred the observation sets would differ only by chance.

Since trainees are the focus, the span of time when they are in counselor education programs, or some portion thereof, comprises X. It is assumed that something in the counselor education program (planned or not, directly or indirectly) caused the trainees to change. If it is important to assess change as a function of training, one must rule out selection procedures, pre-existing personality characteristics and general life experiences as explanations.

Studies using research paradigms which did not attempt to measure change were excluded from consideration. For example, a design would not be included which contrasted types of counselors such as effective versus ineffective, where all had received the same program. One cannot relate change to X when all observations are collected post X. Following Campbell and Stanley, the design might be diagrammed thusly:

Type I	X	O ₁
Type II	X	O ₂

Also not included were prediction studies for enhancing the selection process. The model central to this paradigm is often depicted as

$$y = \beta_0 X_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_p X_p,$$

where y is some rating of performance and the Xs represent personal characteristics or past performance.³

In addition to employing a research design which could detect change, studies selected had to include criterion measures, Os, which assessed emotion, or at least something reflecting emotion. With one exception it was assumed that instruments measured what they proposed to measure. The exception was interview rating scales which attempt to measure empathy, warmth, and so on. Studies using only these kinds

of scales were avoided because of their relationship to skill development as described earlier.

Using the above criteria for including studies, over 30 were selected for initial consideration. Of these, 10 are discussed here which represent the important features of this body of research.

Research Design

The use of pretests appears to be virtually automatic. Authors do not justify their use on grounds of efficiency (Feldt, 1977), nor do they discuss possible limitations such as pretest sensitization. In no study was Design 3 or 6 used. Apparently the authors believe that the utility of pretests is obvious. Perhaps pretests have gained such wide acceptance because of their frequent use and "obvious" necessity in studies where random assignment has not been employed.

Designs 2 and 10 are most commonly used. One reason for the prevalence of these designs is the availability of enrollees in programs as subjects. An example would be subjects enrolled in a National Defense Education Act Guidance and Counseling Institute for one year, e.g., Pennscott and Brown, 1972, Wrightsman, Richard, and Noble, 1966. Participants would "go through the program together," sharing common experiences. Comparison of students' post and pretest scores, or comparison with the change in some other comparable group is used as evidence of program effectiveness.

In most of the studies, researchers did not employ randomization, nor did they present any explanations regarding ways in which the study was limited. The utility of randomization is now an accepted fact in many disciplines; its importance cannot be understated (Collier and Hummel, 1977).

When designs do not employ randomization (and other principles of good experimental design) careful argument is required to establish their validity.

Randomization was used in some studies (Borgers, 1975; Kratochvil, 1969; Myrick & Paré, 1971; Wirt, Betz, & Engle, 1969) but by itself it does not guarantee the validity of an experiment. If subjects are randomly assigned to an experimental condition and then treated as a group by an experimenter, then "group" and "experimenter" are confounded with treatment. Kratochvil (1969) is an example of a study where the treatment consisted of a group treatment. Addelman (1977) provides a discussion of the problems that exist in this type of research and introduces methods to deal with "treatment error." Most studies (Borgers, 1975, would be an example) do not give enough information about the experimental protocol to determine if experimental and control subjects were treated identically except for the treatment.

In addition to the use of randomization or non-equivalent control groups (such as an available, intact group which did not receive the treatment), researchers used other methods in an attempt to achieve comparability between experimental and control subjects. Matching (e.g., Woody, 1971) and other types of systematic designs (e.g., Horan, Stone, and Herold, 1976, "alternately divided" students on a roster into groups) attempt to achieve pre-treatment comparability of groups. Collier and Hummel (1977) present the arguments which developed around systematic versus random arrangements during the early period of the modern era of experimental design. Some of the arguments for randomization are quite subtle, going beyond the usual concerns with confounding

as discussed in Campbell and Stanley (1963).

Fisher (1977) introduced in 1926 his three basic tenets of experimental design, namely randomization, replication, and local control. One must conclude that neither replication (the use of several experimental units under each treatment condition) nor local control (the use of "blocks" to form homogeneous subsets of experimental units) are used any more effectively than randomization in the design of counselor training experiments. While the difficulty of doing research in counselor training could be cited as the reason for the absence of sound experimental design, the dearth of substantive discussions in research reports of the possible effects on interpretations indicates that the researchers are either insensitive or unprepared to deal with issues of experimental design.

Whenever it is said that the experimental design of a study is inadequate, the reply might be "So what!" For example, a counselor training program may 1) place all its graduates in high paying, prestigious positions, 2) get feedback from employers that the graduates are the best trained, most effective they have ever seen, and 3) produce graduates who develop strong national reputations for themselves. If an experimentalist were to say to the program "you have exceedingly effective graduates, but you do not know whether it is the structure of the curriculum, or the dynamic personalities of the faculty, or your selection procedures that is the basis of this program's phenomenal success." The reply "So what!" seems totally justified if the focus is on establishing the total program's effectiveness. Suppose, however, that the faculty of the program attribute its effectiveness to the structure of the

curriculum, and further claim that the curriculum can be exported and successfully used by other counselor educators. In this instance, the "so what" response to the experimentalist's assertion raises serious doubts about the respondents' scientific acumen or ethics. The point is that general statements critical of the level of demonstrated sophistication in a research area often need to be tempered by an appreciation of the varied purposes for which the data have been collected.

Dependent Variables

To research counselor personal-emotional development effectively, adequate criterion variables must exist. As with so much counseling related research, the validity of the dependent variable is often in question. To assess counselor personal-emotional development, characteristic feelings with respect to a variety of objects, situations, and tasks must be determined. To date, personality inventories have been used frequently to assess change. Examples of some of the better known inventories used are the Allport-Veron-Lindsey Study of Values (used in Kratochvil, 1969), the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (used in Woody, 1971), Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (used in Hurst and Jensen, 1968), and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (used in Myrick and Paré, 1971, Woody, 1971), and Wrightsman, Richard, and Noble, 1966). But a review of personality inventories (Gynther and Gynther, 1976) quickly reveals that many of them deal with global concepts, few being directly related to the specific emotions that would probably be under investigation or of interest in counselor personal-emotional development. The validity of even the best inventories is suspect.

A very specific change in one's emotional makeup resulting from the reduction of a focal anxiety might not be reflected in a general inventory. In this case some specific physiological measurement might be more appropriate. In fact, one study (Horan, Stone, and Herold, 1976) did employ physiological assessment, but the study is quite atypical in this respect.

Two of the ten studies used instruments which purport to measure affect; Pennscott and Brown (1972) used the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale and Wrightsman, Richard, and Noble (1966) used the Shallow Affect Scale.

As mentioned above, moral development is bound up with affective development when considering counselor personal-emotional development. One study (Kratochvil, 1969) did attempt to assess changes in moral values as well as those reflected in a personality inventory. As with physiological assessment, this is very rare.

Concluding Remarks

Each counselor trainee's personal-emotional development would be unique in some respects, but similar to others with respect to emotions related to issues of professional ethics and values. None of the studies really address questions related to counselor personal-emotional development as it has been defined here. In general, the research design and/or assessment techniques did not result in the study providing information about counselor personal-emotional development. While studies can be criticized for being ill conceived in regard to stated purpose, it would be grossly unfair to depreciate them because they shed no light on an answer to a question which was not posed.

No platitudes will be stated here concerning the need for improved research design and valid assessment procedures. Such remarks are sometimes given as a sop to an audience which has just had the ugly truth revealed about the profession's research base. The "expert" assures that things could get better if only... .

If professionals want to deal with counselor personal-emotional development they have the formidable task of further defining the concept and stating goals to be accomplished by training programs. However difficult these tasks will be, they will probably be considerably easier than the assessment tasks. Questions concerning design and analysis should be relatively easier to answer.

A paper such as this one will have accomplished its purpose if it adequately introduces the topics, demonstrates by its own example that the definition process is fraught with difficulties which result in an inadequate statement, and makes clear that changing the title of current research efforts while leaving the structure intact will teach the profession little about counselor personal-emotional development.

What priority counselor personal-emotional development should have among professional goals cannot be determined here. However, in this writer's experience the press given to a professional's misconduct (especially in sexual matters) is great when compared to that which is given to a professional's lack of some communication skill. Disregarding the motivations for such uneven coverage, it seems to this writer that issues dealt with in this paper are directly related to the public confidence in the profession.

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Footnotes

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²Charles B. Johnston, doctoral candidate in Educational Psychology, is currently carrying out the work necessary to implement a computerized version of the model. This work is part of Mr. Johnston's doctoral thesis research.

³Readers of some sophistication in statistics and research design might take issue with the above division of research designs, seeing their relationship through some higher level conceptualization such as General Linear Model Theory. My purpose is to highlight the more obvious uses of the designs and the manner in which they are typically used.